



**Purchasing Contract  
CITY OF AUSTIN  
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

**AGENDA ITEM NO.:** 42  
**AGENDA DATE:** Thu 01/13/2005  
**PAGE:** 1 of 3

**SUBJECT:** Authorize execution of a contract with MEYER INSTRUMENTS, Houston, TX, for a forensic comparison microscope for the Austin Police Department in an amount not to exceed \$65,455.

**AMOUNT & SOURCE OF FUNDING:** Funding is available in the Austin Police Department Special Revenue Fund in the 2003 Project Safe Neighborhoods Office of Attorney General Grant.

**FISCAL NOTE:** There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

**REQUESTING** Purchasing  
**DEPARTMENT:** for Police;

**DIRECTOR'S**  
**AUTHORIZATION:** Vickie Schubert

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mick Osborne, Sr. Buyer/974-2995

**PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:** N/A

**BOARD AND COMMISSION ACTION:** N/A

**PURCHASING:** Lowest bid of four bids received.

**MBE / WBE:** This contract will be awarded in compliance with Chapter 2-9 of the City Code (Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program). No subcontracting opportunities were identified; therefore, no goals were established for this solicitation.

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This contract is for the purchase of a Leica comparison microscope with digital imaging system for the Austin Police Department (APD) Forensic Division, Ballistic Section. The comparison microscope is the primary tool used by the APD Firearms Examiner to examine bullets and fired casings collected as evidence to identify weapon type and manufacturer and to perform comparative analysis against suspected firearms. Information gathered is photographed, documented, and archived for comparison to other cases and entered into the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network.

The Firearms Examiner currently uses a 1973 AO comparison microscope that was converted into a ballistic comparator. It is manually operated, requiring the examiner to spend much of the time at the AO scope adjusting levers and moving between other equipment to adjust measurements. It does not have photographic capabilities or interface with a data storage device. All photographs must be taken using a handheld camera through the comparator's eyepiece, which is cumbersome and not precise. Measurements and data are collected on handwritten logs and from those entered into a personal computer for analysis and archival. The AO scope does not have an external light source. The microscope currently used is borrowed from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) lab. There have been several occurrences when the AO scope was not sufficient to acquire a detailed image necessary in making a comparison. The evidence then has to be transported to the DPS lab to use its newer comparison microscopes to confirm the comparison.



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The Leica comparison microscope with digital imaging is a fully automated, integrated system. The purchase of this microscope will achieve improvement three major areas:

1. **Automated System:** All adjustments are made through a motorized system. Through the *automation of essential functions, complex procedures can be accomplished with a few hand movements.* This feature will enable the examiner to focus, change magnification, and switch between left and right sides quickly and precisely. The examiner will no longer have to spend time adjusting manual levers and moving between equipment. All operating elements, such as the buttons for selecting the observation modes, the focus buttons, and the shaft encoders for the stages lie within easy reach of the examiner. The automated system is ergonomically superior to the existing system and will save the examiner time and reduce fatigue.
2. **Digital Imaging System:** A digital imaging system that will be used to document comparisons for case files, accreditation, presentations, training, and court testimony. Network compatible software transfers from the scope to a personal computer for: image archiving, measuring, analyzing and direct reporting. Superior picture quality allows capture of precise details required for forensic comparison.
3. **Optics:** The Leica provides high optical performance via four specialized ultra high performance apochromatic macro objectives with high numerical apertures for crystal clear images, allowing the examiner to pick up the *slightest variances when comparing bullets/projectiles and fired casings* against suspected firearms. The microscope is equipped with various illumination techniques for incident light as well as transmitted light. The comparison bridge allows for better sample assessment by providing several observation techniques: full right image, split image with dividing line, and various superimposition features.

Purchase of this equipment will provide one of the tools necessary for the Ballistic Section to operate as a fully functioning forensic firearm and tool mark section. Full functioning is needed for APD, Forensic Division, Ballistic Section, to meet state requirements to achieve laboratory accreditation by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, Laboratory Accreditation Board.

MBE/WBE solicited: 2/0

MBE/WBE bid: 0/0



**BID TABULATION  
BALLISTIC GRADE COMPARISON BRIDGE MACROSCOPE  
IFB NO. MO05100014**

<b><u>VENDOR</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL BID</u></b>
MEYER INSTRUMENTS HOUSTON, TX	\$65,455
North Central Instruments, Inc. Minneapolis, MN	\$68,689
Armor Forensics Jacksonville, FL	\$75,484
Vashaw Scientific Norcross, GA	\$133,000

**PRICE ANALYSIS**

- a. Adequate competition.
- b. Twenty-four notices were sent including two MBEs. There are no WBE firms listed for this commodity code. Twelve solicitations were issued with MBEs/WBEs. Four bids were received. Two "no bid" responses were received.
- c. This is the first purchase for this type of instrument. There is no price comparison history.

**APPROVAL JUSTIFICATION**

- a. Lowest bid.
- b. The Austin Police Department concurs with the recommended award.
- c. Advertised in the Austin American-Statesman and on the Internet.